

Dresden Annual Meeting  
Thursday, February 24, 2022  
Informational Meeting

Warrant Article Information  
Presented by Board Members

## **Dresden Warrant Article 1 – Open Officer positions**

Officer positions for the District include the Moderator, the Clerk, the Treasurer and 2 Auditors

MODERATOR – The Moderator of the District is an elected official serving a one year term. The Moderator shall conduct annual and special School District meetings, administer oaths to District officers, and carry out any other duties as required by law. He/She shall receive such remuneration as the District may determine.

CLERK OF THE DISTRICT - The Clerk of the District is an elected official serving a one year term. The Clerk shall keep a true record of each District meeting and make any reports to the State of New Hampshire as may be required and shall carry out duties as required by law. He/She shall receive such remuneration as the District may determine.

TREASURER - The Treasurer of the District is an elected official serving a one year term. The Treasurer shall not be a member of the School Board. He/She shall receive such remuneration as the District may determine and perform such duties pertaining to the fiscal affairs of the School District as outlined in the New Hampshire statutes relating to public schools. A Deputy Treasurer shall be appointed by the Treasurer subject to the approval of the Board.

AUDITORS – This requirement is an original piece of the Interstate Compact which was written prior to the NH State RSAs regarding school district auditing. Specifically, NH RSA (Revised Statutes Annotated) 671:5 which provides that “When voters of the district direct the school board to request an audit by independent public accountants from outside the district, they shall not be required to choose auditors for the year covered by said audit.” All of SAU70 School Districts are audited by independent accounting firms.

The Dresden School District ballot does not include School Board members as the Dresden School District is governed by the 11-member Dresden School Board, made up of all seven Hanover School Board members, elected by Hanover voters, plus four of the five Norwich School Board members, elected by Norwich voters. The fifth Norwich Board member participates with the Dresden Board, but does not have voting privileges. The Dresden School Board meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Hanover High School Library.

## **Warrant Article 2 – Bond for Track & Baseball Field rebuilding/renovation**

For the past five years, we have been discussing some of the needs of the aging athletic facilities in the Dresden School District. These discussions have included the Turf field, the HHS track and the Dresden Baseball field. The Turf field project has been completed and is serving us well. The track has had some repairs including mitigation

of uneven lanes due to frost heaving and cleaning of the surface due to it being too slippery. No updates/repairs have been made to the baseball field.

The HHS track was initially installed in 1989 and unfortunately quickly deteriorated due to a poor sub-grade soil quality. Then in the 2006 Dresden Athletic Fields proposal, the track whose condition was very poor and had not been used for competition for several years was included for renovation. That renovation was completed 15 years ago, but during our early investigation while fixing the heaved sections we observed that the substrate did not match Huntress's plan design. The Track was formally named the Brown Track & Field in 2016 in memoriam of long time track coach Chris Brown. After much discussion at the School Board level in 2018 and again in 2019, the Dresden Athletic Advisory Board began discussions with the coaches, Athletic Director Sobel and Facilities Director Daigle regarding the ongoing track issues including uneven surfaces, slippery surfaces and lack of density, all of which had been contributing to running injuries. Directors Sobel and Daigle have met with different experts on tracks over the past four years, the opinions have varied but all agree the track was nearing end of life stages. Options to resurface were expensive ranging from \$110-120,000 for conventional methods in 2019 and results would most likely be limited with no guarantees. After much discussion, the Athletic Advisory Committee made a recommendation to the School Board to rebuild the Brown Track & Field. The Estimated Opinion of Probable Costs is in the amount of \$1,484,913 of which \$1,294,067 is for construction with another \$129,407 set aside for contingency. The information can be found on the District's website. An additional amount of \$61,440 has been budgeted for planning, engineering, design, permitting and construction oversight.

The Dresden Baseball field was installed during the same Athletic Fields proposal bond in 2006. There have not been any significant upgrades to the field since it's opening. The fields have been problematic with wet weather conditions and do not drain appropriately based on the drainage designs that should have been installed. While the drainage ports appear to leach some water they have not been found to be sufficient during high water tables or events. Some hand auguring was completed and confirms that soil density in the outfield is not optimal for proper drainage. Many of the issues cause considerable disruption to the baseball program and significant repairs need to be done. The Estimated Opinion of Probable Costs is in the amount of \$340,101 of which \$272,081 is for construction with another \$27,208 for engineering & permitting, \$40,812 set aside for contingency and \$11,986 for testing/oversite. The information can be found on the District's website.

Any unused funds will be used to pay down the initial principal or offset the subsequent year's budget assessment. The first year's payment projected to be \$167,309 will not come due until the 2023-2024 school budget year and is expected to add \$0.05 to Hanover tax rate and \$0.0078 (less than a penny) to the Norwich tax rate based on current valuations. With other large debt being paid off in 2023-2024, it's likely this project can be paid off in the 2024-2025 school budget year. Please see the projected financials on the district's website.

## **WARRANT ARTICLE #3**

### **District Board and Officer Salaries**

This article sets the stipend for the positions of District Clerk, Moderator, Treasurer and Board Members. The stipends for each position, other than Treasurer and Board Chair, have not changed in quite some time.

The District Clerk and Moderator duties are instrumental in a districts annual voting processes. Together they officiate and record annual meetings, set the official ballots, monitor voting procedures and the polls, direct vote tallying and ratify results.

The Treasurer receives a small percentage increase between 1-2% each year. Their duties are mandated by NH RSA. They are charged with the oversight and independent balancing of all district funds. They review expenditures weekly and balance bank accounts monthly. After review of expenditures by the Board, they sign all district funded checks.

Each Board member is expected to attend monthly meetings from August through June; in normal years, meetings are suspended during the month of July. During budget season, additional meetings are often required. In addition, board members participate in various committees such as: Budget/Finance, Athletic Advisory, Central Staff Development, Evaluation, Negotiations, Policy, Program & Procedure (CPP) & PTO]

A small addition was made in the 2019-20 budget year to add \$300 to the Board Chair's stipend as the Chair participates in more meetings than other members as they are instrumental in setting the agenda in consultation with the administration.

This article's effect on the tax rate is negligible, less than 1 cent.

## **Dresden Warrant Article #4**

### **Hanover Education Association (Teachers) Tentative Agreement**

In December, the Hanover/Dresden School Boards and the Hanover Education Association reached a tentative agreement for a two-year period representing the following school years: 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. This group of employees includes all NH certified teaching positions for classroom and special instruction as well as other professionally licensed positions including nurses, school counselors, occupational therapists, speech & language pathologists, psychologists, mental health and drug & alcohol counselors.

Proposed budgetary changes include:

\*Medical copays increase 1% per year as follows: Yr. 1 to 10% and Yr. 2 to 11%

\*Limitation on fully paid sabbatical leaves to one every other year beginning 2022-2023

\*Retirees and their spouses' medical coverage will be limited to those who have not reached Medicare eligibility age

\*Shared cost percentages for retirees participating in the VT State Retirement health system have been adjusted

- \*Cash in lieu for retirees has been updated to match active employees
- \*Increases are added to the base for each year: Year 1 – 2%, Year 2 – 2% and allow 1 step advancement per year for eligible employees
- \*Annuity allowance for employees on top step with no further step advancement available has been increased from 3 to 3.5%

There were many changes to the Language content and they are summarized as follows:

- \*General language changes throughout document to gender neutral pronouns and updating all references of Board to plural Boards
- \*Definitions with regards to the school year and potential start dates have been clarified
- \*Definition of shared staff and expectations have been added
- \*Recognition and position names the Agreement includes from an MOU that was filed with the Public Employee Labor Relations Board have been updated
- \*Number of days required for response and how documents are disbursed during a grievance were clarified
- \*Expansion and clarification of employee evaluation section includes how changes to the policy will be handled if they become necessary, changing wording surrounding performance problems from difficulties to deficiencies, defining proration payments for mentors with partial year assignments and removal of old policy language
- \*Clarification of service time recognition and how a new employee is placed on scale
- \*Inclusion of the requirement for an improvement plan before withholding of a base or step increase can occur
- \*Clarification and expansion of early retirement requirements for active engagement of duties and notification of intent
- \*Inclusion of a notification period should a reduction in force due to budget changes be necessary
- \*Removal of old policy and updating of wording surrounding grievances during the reduction in force process

Expanded information and projected tax rates for each year of the proposed agreement can be located on the Districts website at [sau70.org](http://sau70.org) in the Finance Department section.

## **Dresden Warrant Article #5**

### **Dresden Support Staff Association Tentative Agreement**

In January, the Board and the Hanover Support Staff, HSS/NEA New Hampshire reached a tentative agreement for the next three-year period (2022-2023, 2023-2024 and 2024-2025). This group of employees include educational assistants, ABA behavioral technicians, school secretaries, some administrative assistants and accounting assistants as well as the safety/atrium coordinator(s).

Proposed budgetary changes include:

\*Medical copay increase 1/2% per year as follows: Yr. 1 to 6.5; Yr. 2 to 7% and Yr. 3 to 7.5%

\*Changed the scale to standardize the step increase at 2.5% in between and the following increases for each of 3 years: Yr. 1 – 1.0%, Yr. 2 – 2.0% and Yr. 3 – 2.50%

\*Martin Luther King/Civil Rights Day has been added as a paid holiday for school year employees

There were many changes to the Language content and they are summarized as follows:

\*Updated and included wording to recognize changes from MOU's filed with the NH PELRB regarding positions that are covered by the agreement and an agreement regarding Intensive Special Needs and Substitute Differential as well as clarification of duties expectations if an EA is subbing for a Teacher

\*update to include requirement of posting new agreements to the District website, notification of vacancies and member seniority lists

\* Removal throughout all sections (insurance, leave, etc) of grandfather wording for employees hired before July 1, 2008 and having the ability to participate and/or accrue benefits at a 17.5 hour weekly threshold; most of the current thresholds are 20 for part-time folks and is prorated

\*clarification to the employee of who is responsible for evaluating their performance, request for new employees to receive two evaluations in their first year, removal of reference to antiquated policy, allowance of the ability to grieve the evaluation procedure and methods of implementation, requirement to provide updated job description in the event of a change in position, and update of personnel file policy GBJ

\*addition of wording to allow by mutual agreement the ability to bypass Step One in the grievance process and file directly with the Superintendent when the grievance is filed on behalf of the entire union

\*provide clarification for how and when staff are paid overtime for attending meetings

\*With regards to Leave: Expansion of expectations regarding extended leaves of absence and notification requirements; clarify use of bereavement leave when arrangements are delayed and remove the definition of immediate family member moved to Article 1; school Emergency Days – expectations regarding duties have been added in the event an early release is necessary; allow vacation accruals to run from July 1 to June 30 with up to 10 days to be carried over and used no later than December 31<sup>st</sup> or risk forfeiting and clarify what part of time will be paid out upon separation

\*Mentorship – new item added so a committee will meet over the next three years to discuss mentorship options and practices in order to provide recommendations by May 1, 2024 in time for the next negotiation session

\*agreement for the parties to follow the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act in regards to work day hours and paid breaks; clarification on school year employee work and professional development days to be included in their individual letter of intent

## **Dresden Warrant Article 6 – General Fund Operating Budget,**

**Please see the Dresden FY22-23 Presentation with Notes 2.24.22**

## **Dresden Warrant Article #7: Fund Balance Retention**

There are basically three options for disposition of the remaining Fund Balance at the end of any given fiscal year:

- Appropriations to Trust Funds (“Transfer”)
- Returned to the taxpayers when they are utilized by the Department of Revenue Administration in calculating the local education tax rate (reduction of District Tax Assessment) for following fiscal year (“Return”).
- Retention of unassigned funds (“Retain”) – which is an option that the Dresden School District officially adopted in 2014 at a cap of 2.5%.

It is important to note that the Dresden School District is not allowed to hold money in trust due to the Interstate agreement and differing state laws surrounding the treatment of these types of funds, so without this option we do not have any funds to draw upon if an emergency situation arises.

This article if passed would allow the District to retain up to 5% of the net Hanover assessment from unassigned end of year balance. The School Board would determine the actual amount to be retained each year. Any fund balance not retained is “returned”.

Why would the school district want to retain a portion of the unassigned fund balance?

- Respond to an emergency or other unforeseen event such as an unexpected building repair, equipment replacement, or uninsured loss.
- Cover unexpected revenue shortfalls which would keep the district running in the event of late or lower than expected local (tuition), state or federal payments.
- Stabilize cash flow and maintain good credit ratings.

Approval of this proposed Warrant Article, would provide a level of financial flexibility to react to emergencies or other significant unforeseen circumstances. It is considered to be a best practice in financial management that is currently used by the majority of towns and many school districts across the state. Dresden’s current net assessment to Hanover (without additional articles) is \$17,192,476 and 5% of that is \$859,623. Keeping in mind any retainage that is voted may be up to 5%, not a total of.